

House Republican Press Release

March 12, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

REP. CAFERO PUSHES MANDATORY SENTENCES FOR VIOLENT, REPEAT CRIMINALS



HARTFORD – Violent repeat criminals - including rapists, arsonists and murderers - who have demonstrated disregard for the public’s safety should receive mandatory life sentences under the proposed Three Strikes statutes, House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk testified today before the Judiciary Committee.

Cafero said the public outcry over the horrific Cheshire triple murders of the Petit family last July is clear and steps must be taken to get more dangerous criminals off the streets. Members of the Petit family also testified in support of the harsher sentences and asked for legislative relief after Cafero spoke to the committee.

“We propose that once a person is convicted as a persistent dangerous felony offender for committing three serious felonies that person shall serve life in prison without possibility of release,” Cafero said. He said currently prosecutors have great latitude in charging under the persistent felony statutes, and judges have discretion in imposing wide ranges of sentences.

Cafero said, “Prosecutors will have discretion under our proposals but at the very least they will be required to explain on the record why they chose not to bring tougher charges.” Cafero called for no judicial discretion because the offenses are so heinous.

He added that the public must feel safer than they have since the invasion of the Petit home and the murder of the three female members of the family. Republicans also proposed bringing the tougher charge of burglary in the first degree for anyone who invades a home that is occupied.

The Democratic majority in the legislature has consistently rejected Republican efforts to impose mandatory longer sentences for the most serious crimes such as rape and murder. “The public’s reaction has been revulsion and bewilderment as to why it is that some of our most dangerous criminals with long histories of persistent offenses are still walking our streets and are not in jail. We have to respond to those concerns,” Cafero said.